

RILEY'S RAINFOREST



“Send down ... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing...”

—Bahá'u'lláh

Explore & Soar: Habits for Happiness

Thinking more optimistically is a skill you can develop. Try these tips:

- ☐ Practice gratitude. When you're thankful for what you have, it's easier to see the good in life.
- ☐ Volunteer. Helping others can give you a new perspective on your own challenges.
- ☐ Hang out with positive people. Attitudes are contagious, so choose uplifting friends.



- ☐ Read inspiring stories. Seeing how others overcame adversity in life can give you hope for what's possible.
- ☐ Learn from mistakes. Accept that they'll happen sometimes, but you'll improve if you keep trying.
- ☐ Focus on your strengths. Find ways to use the skills that give you the most confidence.
- ☐ Look for humor. Laughter helps relieve stress and boost your mood.

Encourage Yourself

Imagine if your best friend failed a school project or made a big mistake during a performance. Do you criticize your friend? Or do you tell them it's okay and next time will be better?

Of course, you'd comfort your friend with kind words. But what if the one who made a mistake was *you*? We're often more critical of ourselves than others, especially in our self-talk—the way we think or silently talk to ourselves. But positive self-talk can make a big difference in our health and happiness. Research shows that speaking to ourselves in encouraging ways can help us be less stressed and more successful.

One study found that those who thought optimistically were less likely to get depressed, and dozens of studies show that positive self-talk improves athletic performance.

One way to speak to yourself more kindly is to use “you” or your name, rather than “I.” Since we're less harsh with others, talking to yourself as if you were someone else helps you be more compassionate.

Negative self-talk can happen automatically, so pause and pay attention to your thoughts. Watch for phrases like “I can't,” “I'll never,” “It's too hard,” or “I always mess up.” Instead, think of **affirmations**—inspiring expressions such as “You can do this” or “Keep trying!”

Everyone faces obstacles. Instead of seeing them as roadblocks, look at them as hurdles to jump over as you race toward your dreams. If you trip, pick yourself up and keep going. Encourage yourself the way you would a friend, and you may be amazed at how confident you can be.

Curiosity Canopy



T rue or False? You can make yourself feel happier by smiling. **TRUE.** When you make a smiling motion with your face, your brain reacts to that movement by decreasing feelings of stress and improving your mood. Your smiles can spread the happiness to others, too!